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AUTHOR Summers, James B.
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ABSTRACT

This talk covers the seven major concepts or general parameters of pupil transportation within which a school board must function: (1) definition of school bus transportation, (2) responsibilities of a school board, (3) type of school board, (4) purchasing school buses, (5) contracting school buses, (6) operations, and (7) national standards. (Author)

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"PUPIL TRANSPORTATION --

WHAT SCHOOL BOARDS SHOULD KNOW"

NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARD ASSOCIATION

31st ANNUAL CONVENTION

PHILADELPHIA

BY

JAMES B. SUMMERS

VICE PRESIDENT - SALES

SUPERIOR COACH DIVISION
OF
SHELLER GLOBE CORPORATION

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MR. CHAIRMAN, FELLOW PANEL MEMBERS, AND LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

THIS MORNING I HAVE THE PLEASURE OF TALKING TO YOU REGARDING "PUPIL TRANSPORTATION -- WHAT SCHOOL BOARDS SHOULD KNOW." WHEN I WAS ASKED TO SPEAK TO YOU REGARDING PUPIL TRANSPORTATION, I ACCEPTED WITHOUT HESITATION, SINCE SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION HAS JUST ABOUT BEEN MY LIFE SINCE 1946. IT WAS NOT UNTIL I RECEIVED THE SUPPORTING DATA THAT IT SUDDENLY OCCURRED TO ME --- WHO WAS I TO STAND BEFORE YOU AND SAY, "THIS IS WHAT SCHOOL BOARDS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PUPIL TRANSPORTATION." IN THE FIRST PLACE, EVEN IF I KNEW ALL THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT PUPIL TRANSPORTATION AS A MEMBER OF A SCHOOL BOARD, I CERTAINLY COULD NOT IMPART IT TO YOU THIS MORNING IN THE SPACE OF 30 MINUTES.

WITH THOSE APOLOGIES OUT OF THE WAY, WON'T YOU CONSIDER THIS PRESENTATION IN TERMS OF WHAT YOU AS A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER MIGHT USE IN YOUR OWN PARTICULAR SITUATION. IF FROM THIS TALK EVEN A FEW OF YOU TAKE HOME ONE NEW IDEA, ONE NEW AREA TO EXPLORE, THEN MY BEING SELECTED WILL BE A WORTHWHILE ACT.

THIS TALK IS DIVIDED INTO SEVEN MAJOR SECTIONS AND HOPEFULLY, IN THESE SEVEN CAN BE ESTABLISHED THE GENERAL PARAMETERS ON PUPIL TRANSPORTATION WITHIN WHICH A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER MUST FUNCTION. THE SEVEN ARE:

SLIDE #1

1. WHAT IS SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION?
2. WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SCHOOL BOARD?
3. WHAT TYPE OF SCHOOL BOARD ARE YOU?
4. PURCHASING SCHOOL BUSES.
5. CONTRACTING SCHOOL BUSES.
6. OPERATIONS.
7. NATIONAL STANDARDS.

WHAT IS SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION?

IT REALLY STARTED MANY YEARS AGO IN PRIMARILY RURAL

SLIDE #2

AREAS AND SOME OF THE EARLY UNITS LOOKED LIKE THIS. SOME WERE EVEN MORE CRUDE BY TODAY'S STANDARDS WITH NO WINDOWS, JUST TARPAULINS THAT COULD BE DROPPED DOWN OVER THE SIDE TO KEEP OUT THE WEATHER AND EVEN IN SOME CASES DRAWN BY HORSES. AS EDUCATION WAS IMPROVED SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION GREW.

IN THE LAST THREE DECADES, EDUCATION IN THE UNITED

SLIDE #3

STATES HAS CHANGED CONSIDERABLY. AS AN EXAMPLE, IN 1940 THERE WERE SOME 223,000 SCHOOL DISTRICTS. THIS HAS BEEN CUT ALMOST IN HALF TO APPROXIMATELY 120,000 DISTRICTS. IN SPITE OF THIS REDUCTION, THE PUPIL ENROLLMENT HAS INCREASED FROM 28 MILLION TO APPROXIMATELY 50 MILLION. THE REDUCTION IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS WAS A RESULT OF CONSOLIDATION AND, AS VARIOUS SMALL SCHOOLS WERE CONSOLIDATED TO GIVE YOUNGSTERS A BETTER EDUCATION, IT BECAME NECESSARY TO TRANSPORT THESE

SLIDE #4

YOUNGSTERS FROM GREATER DISTANCES. TODAY, OF THE ESTIMATED 50 MILLION SCHOOL CHILDREN, APPROXIMATELY 35% to 40% ARE

TRANSPORTED TO AND FROM SCHOOL EACH DAY. IT IS OFTEN SAID IN BUSINESS THAT WITHOUT ORDERS OR SALES NO COMPANY CAN FUNCTION. BY THE SAME TOKEN, FOR THE SCHOOLS INVOLVING THE 35% TO 40% BEING TRANSPORTED, IF THE CHILDREN DON'T GET TO SCHOOL, SCHOOLS DON'T FUNCTION. IN OUR PRESENT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION MUST BE CONSIDERED AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE WHOLE.

SLIDE #5

WHAT LIES AHEAD? ACCORDING TO THE STATISTICAL PROJECTIONS OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, AS WELL AS THE OFFICE OF EDUCATION, IT IS APPARENT THE POST-WORLD WAR II BOOM IN ENROLLMENTS HAS NOW FLATTENED OUT SOMEWHAT AND FEWER YOUNGSTERS ARE ANTICIPATED IN THE ELEMENTARY GRADES. SOME GROWTH WILL BE THERE BUT NOWHERE NEAR WHAT TRANSPIRED FOR THE LAST TWO DECADES. OTHER AREAS OF TRANSPORTATION

SLIDE #6

GROWTH, HOWEVER, INVOLVE SUCH THINGS AS HAZARD LAWS IN VARIOUS STATES, REQUIRING THAT CHILDREN FACED WITH THESE TRAFFIC HAZARDS MUST BE TRANSPORTED. SOME CONSOLIDATIONS ARE BEING SEGMENTED OFF BECAUSE OF SIZE, AND ADDITIONAL TRANSPORTATION REQUIREMENTS RESULT. FEDERAL AND STATE PROGRAMS TO ENCOURAGE PRE-SCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN ACTIVITIES AS WELL AS RETENTION OF THE HIGH SCHOOL DROP-OUT ALSO INCREASE THE NECESSITY FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION. IN ABOUT EIGHT YEARS WITH 46.3% OF OUR POPULATION UNDER 25, THERE IS LIKELY TO BE ANOTHER DEMAND, HOWEVER, WITHOUT THE BOOM CHARACTERISTICS OF POST-WORLD WAR II.

SLIDE #7

THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 240,000 SCHOOL BUSES IN THE UNITED STATES TODAY. IN TERMS OF TYPES THERE ARE TWO -- APPROXIMATELY 220,000 FULL SIZED SCHOOL BUSES AND APPROXIMATEL ANOTHER 20,000 SMALL VEHICLES CALLED SCHOOL BUSES, SUCH AS CONVERTED STATION WAGONS, SUBURBANS, AND VANS. APPROXIMATELY 2/3 OF THESE SCHOOL BUSES ARE PUBLICLY OWNED AND APPROXIMATEL 1/3 PRIVATELY OWNED AND OPERATING UNDER CONTRACT TO THE SCHOO SYSTEM. THE SAFETY RECORD OF PUPIL TRANSPORTATION IS AN EXCELLENT ONE. MOST SAFETY RESEARCHERS REFER TO SAFETY

SLIDE #8

RECORDS IN TERMS OF FATALITIES PER 100 MILLION PASSENGER MILES. SCHOOL BUSES ARE IN THE AREA OF .05 to .06 FATALITIES INSIDE THE BUS PER 100 MILLION PASSENGER MILES AS COMPARED, FOR INSTANCE, TO AUTOMOBILES AT ABOUT 2.4 AND AIRLINES AT .38. THE SIZE OF SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION, TO ME IS MUCH MORE DRAMATICALLY SHOWN IF CONSIDERATION IS GIVEN TO EXPOSURE AS A PASSENGER ON A SCHOOL BUS.

IF ONE TAKES 18 TO 20 MILLION PASSENGERS TO AND FROM SCHOOL DAILY IN SCHOOL BUSES, AND MULTIPLIES THE RESULTING 36 TO 40 MILLION BY AN AVERAGE OF A 180-DAY SCHOOL YEAR, THE RESULT

SLIDE # 9

IS OVER SIX (6) BILLION PASSENGERS IN SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION EACH SCHOOL YEAR. OVER SIX (6) BILLION PASSENGERS -- IT STAGGERS THE IMAGINATION EVEN IN THIS DAY OF NATIONAL DEBT. THUS YOU HAVE A THUMBNAIL SKETCH OF -- "WHAT IS SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION."

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SCHOOL BOARD?

IN TERMS OF PUPIL TRANSPORTATION THESE RESPONSIBILITIES SUBSTANTIAL. WHETHER MORAL OR LEGAL, DEPENDING UPON STATE STATUTES, THEY ARE STILL SUBSTANTIAL. EACH

SLIDE #-10

MORNING WHEN PARENTS SEE THEIR CHILDREN BOARD A SCHOOL BUS THEY ARE ENTRUSTING THE LIVES OF THEIR YOUNGSTERS IN THE HANDS OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AND AS BOARD MEMBERS YOU ARE THE RESPONSIBLE BODY OF THAT SYSTEM. OVER SIX (6) BILLION PASSENGERS IN EACH SCHOOL YEAR! I SAID IT STAGGERS THE IMAGINATION --- IT SHOULD ALSO ENCOURAGE EACH BOARD MEMBER TO REVIEW HIS OWN POSITION AND ACTIONS REGARDING THE SAFE TRANSPORTATION OF THE YOUNGSTERS IN HIS SCHOOL SYSTEM.

A SCHOOL BOARD IS A POLICY MAKING BODY. IT IS UP TO THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD TO DECIDE WHAT THEY WANT IN THE WAY OF SCHOOL BUS EQUIPMENT TO BEST FULFILL THE NEEDS OF THEIR PARTICULAR SCHOOL SYSTEM ---THE PARENTS AND THE CHILDREN. THESE NEEDS VARY. TO THE SCHOOL SYSTEM IT CAN MEAN GETTING CHILDREN TO AND FROM SCHOOL ON TIME IN THE MOST EXPEDITIOUS AND ECONOMICAL MANNER. TO THE PARENT, THE PRIME CONCERN IS THE SAFETY AND PROTECTION

SLIDE # 11

WHILE HIS CHILD IS ON THE BUS. SAFETY MUST BE THE PRIME CONSIDERATION WHETHER THE BOARD IS INVOLVED IN THEIR OWN BUS OPERATION OR WHETHER THEY ARE CONTRACTING FOR THIS SERVICE. WE WILL GET MORE DEEPLY INTO THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE BOARD MEMBERS WHEN WE DISCUSS PURCHASING AND CONTRACTING.

TWO OTHER AREAS BOARD MEMBERS SHOULD CONSIDER THEIR RESPONSIBILITY INVOLVE AUTHORIZATION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF PROPER RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR PUPILS WHEN RIDING A BUS.

SLIDE # 12

REASONABLE DISCIPLINE IN KEEPING WITH THAT INSIDE THE SCHOOL SHOULD EXIST ALSO IN SCHOOL BUSES. ROWDYISM ON A BUS ENDANGERS NOT ONLY THE LIVES OF THE PERPETRATORS BUT ALSO ALL OF THE OTHER YOUNGSTERS, WITH EVEN THE BEST OF SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS. PARENTAL COOPERATION IS A MUST, PARTICULARLY IN TERMS OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION SUPPORT. WHILE IN SOME AREAS MONITORS HAVE HAD TO RIDE VEHICLES, THIS SHOULD BE THE EXCEPTION RATHER THAN THE RULE. MUSIC HAS BEEN KNOWN TO HAVE A POSITIVE AFFECT ON MANY CHILDREN HOWEVER, EXPERIMENTATION MUST BE DONE IN ALL SCHOOL SYSTEMS TO DETERMINE THE BEST POSSIBLE SOLUTION.

THE LAST AND FINAL AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY IS IN TERMS OF TAX DOLLARS AND EFFICIENCY OF OPERATION. PARENTS LOOK TO THE BOARD TO SPEND WISELY IN THE INTEREST OF SAFETY AND COMFORT FOR THEIR CHILDREN. THE BOARD MUST THEREFORE, EXAMINE AND UNDERSTAND ALL FACETS OF THEIR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IN THESE THREE TERMS, SAFETY, COMFORT, AND EFFICIENCY. IN TODAY'S CLIMATE WITH THE PRESSURE ON THE TAX DOLLAR, THERE IS NO DOUBT YOU CAN WIN MORE FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE MORE PEOPLE BY SHOWING

SLIDE # 13

HOW MANY DOLLARS YOU CAN SAVE. THIS IS AN ADMIRABLE COURSE OF ACTION PROVIDING SAFETY AND COMFORT ARE NOT SACRIFICED, AND OVER THE LIFE OF THE VEHICLE THE BARGAIN DOES NOT BECOME COSTLY. THE WILLINGNESS TO TRY TO BE ALERT TO INNOVATIONS AND STAND UP FOR THEM IN TERMS OF COST/BENEFIT, BECOMES A VERY DEFINITE RESPONSIBILITY.

WE NOW COME TO AREA 3, ENTITLED "WHAT TYPE OF SCHOOL BOARD ARE YOU?"

IT WOULD SEEM THAT IN TERMS OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT PUPIL TRANSPORTATION, A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER WOULD FIRST HAVE TO CATEGORIZE HIS SCHOOL BOARD IN PERHAPS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES. IS THE BOARD ON WHICH HE IS SITTING THE POLICY MAKING GROUP FOR A LARGE SCHOOL ALREADY EMPLOYING A FULL-TIME TRAINED TRANSPORTATION SUPERVISOR AND HAVING FULL GARAGE FACILITIES FOR THEIR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION FLEET; OR DOES THE SCHOOL SYSTEM HE SERVES FALL IN WHAT COULD BE TERMED THE MEDIUM-SIZED CATEGO WITH A TRANSPORTATION SUPERVISOR OR PERHAPS AN ACTING TRANSPORTATION SUPERVISOR AND ONLY FACILITIES FOR LUBRICATION AND MI NOR REPAIRS; OR IS HE A BOARD MEMBER OF WHAT COULD BE TERMED A SMALL SCHOOL SYSTEM WITH ONLY AN ACTING TRANSPORTATION MAN USUALLY WEARING TWO HATS AND THE FACILITIES CONSIST OF THE LOCAL GARAGE OR AUTOMOBILE DEALER, OR IN SOME CASES, THE LOCAL SERVICE STATION. THESE THREE MAJOR CATEGORIES ARE IMPORTANT

SLIDE # 14

SINCE THEY AFFECT IN MANY WAYS THE THRUST OF THE SCHOOL BOARD IN RELATION TO PUPIL TRANSPORTATION.

IN THE LARGE SCHOOLS CAPITAL EXPENDITURES HAVE ALREADY BEEN MADE FOR FACILITIES, WHEREAS IN THE MEDIUM AND SMALLER SCHOOLS, THE WHEREWITHALL FROM TAXES IS DIFFICULT TO COME BY AND USUALLY HAS SO MANY OTHER PRESSING DEMANDS ON IT THAT THE MAJOR INVESTMENT CANNOT BE MADE. THIS CLASSIFICATION BECOMES EXTREMELY IMPORTANT AS MORE AND MORE EMPHASIS IS PLACED ON PROPER MAINTENANCE OF THE SCHOOL BUS FLEET AS DEMONSTRATED IN THE ACTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION IN WASHINGTON. VARIATIONS IN PURCHASING ALSO ARE INVOLVED IN SIZE OF SCHOOLS, AND FACILITIES AVAILABLE. AS WE GET INTO SOME OF THE OTHER AREAS OF THIS PRESENTATION YOU WILL HOPEFULLY RECOGNIZE WHY CLASSIFICATION BY SIZE WILL AFFECT YOUR ACTIONS.

WE NOW COME TO THE FOURTH ITEM ENTITLED "PURCHASING."

WE HAVE DISCUSSED THE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITIES, TYPE OF SCHOOL BOARD IN TERMS OF SIZE AND THE REQUIREMENT FOR POLICY AS TO WHAT IS WANTED IN THE WAY OF SCHOOL BUS EQUIPMENT TO BEST FULFILL THE NEEDS OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM, CHILDREN, AND PARENTS. IF A SCHOOL BUS IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, AND WITHOUT THIS TRANSPORTATION SOME SCHOOLS WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO FUNCTION, THEN IT CANNOT BE LUMPED WITH OTHER COMMODITIES SUCH AS JANITORIAL SUPPLIES, SPORTS EQUIPMENT, AND PAPER TOWEL

SLIDE # 15

SLIDE # 16

A POOR FLOOR WAX MERELY MEANS THAT THE JOB MAY HAVE TO BE DONE MORE OFTEN; A CHEAP BASKETBALL MERELY MEANS LESS LIFE AND PERHAPS LESS BOUNCE; PAPER TOWELS WITH A POOR ABSORBENT FACTOR CAN STILL BE USED UP AND BETTER QUALITY BOUGHT IN THE FUTURE. SCHOOL BUSES DESTINED TO CARRY CHILDREN FOR EIGHT (8) TO TEN (10) YEARS SHOULD NOT AND CANNOT BE LUMPED INTO THESE CATEGORIES.

BUILDING A NEW SCHOOL OR ADDING CLASSROOMS TO THE EXISTING STRUCTURE OBVIOUSLY IS SOMETHING THAT IS CAREFULLY INVESTIGATED AND THUS DISCUSSED AND RE-DISCUSSED WITH THE ARCHITECT AND THE CONTRACTOR. SCHOOL BUSES

SLIDE # 17

ARE IN EFFECT A CLASSROOM ---A CLASSROOM ON WHEELS, AND UNFORTUNATELY, SUBJECTED TO FAR MORE POTENTIAL DANGER THAN THE CLASSROOM IN THE BUILDING ITSELF. PURCHASING STARTS WITH SPECIFICATIONS AND THESE SHOULD BE SET ACCORDING TO BOARD POLICY WHETHER MINIMUM, MEDIUM, OR MAXIMUM. ANY BUS PURCHASE SHOULD MEET OR EXCEED THESE SPECIFICATIONS AND ACCEPTANCE OF ANYTHING LESS PROSTITUTES THE POLICY MAKING FUNCTION. SPECIFICATIONS NORMALLY DELINIATE THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL

SLIDE # 18

SCHOOL SYSTEM IN TERMS OF OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT AND PERHAPS SOME SPECIFICS BASED ON THE HISTORICAL PERFORMANCE OF THAT TYPE OF VEHICLE IN THAT SCHOOL SYSTEM. STATE SPECIFICATIONS ARE IN EXISTENCE IN ALL STATES BUT HERE AGAIN

THEY ARE NOT ALL ENCOMPASSING BUT RATHER A MINIMUM SET OF STANDARDS OR GUIDELINES FOR INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS TO FOLLOW. IF YOU WRITE DETAILED SPECIFICATIONS BECAUSE YOU WANT SOME ITEM OF CONSTRUCTION OR EQUIPMENT BECAUSE YOU ARE CONVINCED THIS IS THE BEST WAY TO TRAVEL, THEN DON'T ABROGATE YOUR POSITION AND ACCEPT LESS.

ALONG WITH THE SPECIFICATIONS, CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO PERFORMANCE, SERVICE, AND INNOVATIONS. WHAT DOES THE SELLER OFFER IN THESE THREE CATEGORIES AND WHAT HAS BEEN THE HISTORY OF THIS PRODUCT OR INDIVIDUAL? ARE THERE INNOVATIONS THAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE BID SPECIFICATIONS BECAUSE THEY WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE SAFETY AND COMFORT OF THE RIDING PUPIL? SHOULD THESE INNOVATIONS BE TESTED ON ONE OR TWO VEHICLES FOR THE NEXT YEAR OR TWO TO DETERMINE THEIR EFFECTIVENESS IN THAT PARTICULAR SCHOOL SYSTEM? IS THERE A STOCK OF SERVICE PARTS READILY AVAILABLE? DOES THE PROSPECTIVE BIDDER HAVE SERVICE PEOPLE OR A SERVICE TRUCK? WHAT HAS BEEN THE PERFORMANCE OF THIS PRODUCT IN THE SCHOOL FLEET OR IN A NEIGHBORING SCHOOL FLEET? ALL OF THESE BECOME EXTREMELY IMPORTANT IN DETERMINING WHAT SPECIFICATIONS SHOULD BE WRITTEN, WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED, HOW DETAILED THEY SHOULD BE AND WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THE SELLER?

SLIDE # 19

THE QUESTION CERTAINLY WILL BE ASKED BY SOMEONE -- "AREN'T ALL SCHOOL BUSES SAFE?" THE ANSWER WOULD HAVE TO BE YES, THEY ARE, AND CERTAINLY WHEN COMPARED WITH ANY OTHER TYPE OF TRANSPORTATION ON THE ROAD TODAY. UNFORTUNATELY, THE STATEMENT CANNOT BE MADE THAT ALL ACCIDENTS ARE THE SAME. VIRTUALLY EVERY SCHOOL BUS MANUFACTURER BUILDS THEIR RESPECTIVE SCHOOL BUS BODIES A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY. BY THIS SAME TOKEN, THERE ARE

SLIDE # 20

VARIATIONS IN AVAILABLE OPTIONS. A GOOD EXAMPLE, THE PADDING ON THE SEATS. YOUR SPECIFICATIONS CAN CALL FOR PADDED SEATS AND THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE UNPADDED FRAME RAIL DOES BECOME AN INJURY PRODUCING SURFACE. THIS PADDING CAN BE 1/4" THICK, 2" THICK, OR IT CAN BE TESTED TO ONE OF THE MVSS, THE SAME AS THE DASH ON YOUR PRIVATE AUTOMOBILE.

ALL OF THIS LEADS UP TO AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT CATEGORY CALLED "THE JUDGMENT FACTOR." WE'VE SEEN THAT SPECIFICATIONS CANNOT BE ALL ENCOMPASSING AND THEREFORE

SLIDE # 21

THERE MUST BE A JUDGMENT FACTOR INVOLVED. COMPLETE RELIANCE ON ONLY THE SPECIFICATIONS CAN BE IN EFFECT AN ESCAPE MECHANISM. GOOD JUDGMENT IS STILL NEEDED TO MAKE THE BEST DECISION. ENOUGH INVESTIGATIONS MUST BE MADE, HOWEVER, SO THAT THE DECISION IS MADE BY THE BOARD AND NOT BY THE BIDDER. ONE THING CERTAINLY MUST BE MENTIONED,

SLIDE # 22

IF THE BOARD DELEGATES AUTHORITY TO A QUALIFIED TRANSPORTATION SUPERVISOR, WITH PROPER GUIDELINES WITHIN WHICH TO WORK, DON'T IGNORE HIS RECOMMENDATIONS. ALL TOO OFTEN A WELL-MEANING BOARD WILL PROCEED WITHOUT TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE EXPERIENCE, THE EXPOSURE, AND THE FAMILIARITY THE TRANSPORTATION SUPERVISOR HAS WITH THE PUPIL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM. LET HIM TALK, LET HIM EXPLAIN THE REASONS WHY, THEN BACK HIM AND YOU WILL HAVE A BETTER SYSTEM ALL AROUND.

WHILE MY FORTE HAS BEEN THE BUS BODY BUSINESS, AND IN SOME RESPECTS I HAVE SPENT MORE TIME IN THIS TALK WITH IT, THIS PARTIALITY IS NOT BASED ON MY POSITION IN MANUFACTURING.

SLIDE # 23

OBVIOUSLY THE STEERING CHARACTERISTICS AND BRAKING CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHASSIS ARE IMPORTANT FROM A SAFETY VIEWPOINT. THE BUS BODY, HOWEVER, BECOMES THE ENVELOPE WHICH MUST PROTECT THE CHILDREN. WHILE LONGEVITY IS OBVIOUSLY IMPORTANT AND COMFORT MUST ALSO BE INCLUDED, THE SAFETY OF THE PASSENGERS BECOMES THE PRIME OBJECTIVE OF THE BODY. OUTSIDE OF BRAKES AND STEERING, THE AREAS OF CONSIDERATION FOR THE CHASSIS BECOME THAT OF ECONOMY OF OPERATION AS WELL AS LONGEVITY. HERE YOUR TERRAIN, THE NUMBER OF STARTS AND STOPS, THE AVAILABILITY OF SERVICE AND PARTS, THE CONDITION OF THE ROADS THEMSELVES ALL ENTER THE PICTURE OF CHASSIS REQUIREMENTS. ENGINE SIZE, KINGPIN SIZE, AXLE LOAD, TYPE OF TRANSMISSION, REAR-END

SLIDE # 24

RATIO ALL ARE IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS IN SETTING UP YOUR CHASSIS SPECIFICATIONS. HERE IT AGAIN BECOMES OBVIOUS WHY STATE SPECIFICATIONS MUST BE CONSIDERED MINIMUM RATHER THAN MAXIMUM. HERE IT AGAIN BECOMES OBVIOUS TESTING, CAREFUL RECORD KEEPING, AND HISTORICAL PERFORMANCE FORM THE BASIS FOR "JUDGMENT FACTOR" SO NECESSARY IN TODAYS BUSINESS. EIGHT TO TEN YEARS IS A LONG TIME TO LIVE WITH A LOW-BID WITH NO INVESTIGATIONS MADE AND NO JUDGMENT FACTOR USED.

THE PRECEEDING WAS PRIMARILY APPLICABLE TO THE PURCHASING OF SCHOOL BUSES FOR A PUBLICLY OWNED OPERATION. LET US NOW CONSIDER THE PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AREA OF CONTRACTING. IF YOU WILL RECALL, I MENTIONED THAT ROUGHLY 1/3 OF THE BUSES IN OPERATION IN THE UNITED STATES ARE PRIVATELY OWNED AND CONTRACTED TO THE SCHOOLS FOR THEIR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION. SHOULD YOUR BOARD CONSIDER THE CONTRACTING OF THEIR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM? THE ANSWER IS MOST DEFINITELY "YES." YOU WILL NOTICE I USED THE WORD CONSIDER RATHER THAN GO TO, BECAUSE THE DECISION HAS TO BE YOURS AFTER YOUR OWN CAREFUL INVESTIGATION. THE INVESTIGATION, HOWEVER, IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED.

SLIDE # 25

SLIDE # 26

JUST AS THERE ARE GOOD PEOPLE AND THOSE NOT SO GOOD, JUST AS THERE ARE GOOD SCHOOL SYSTEMS AND THOSE NOT SO GOOD, SO THERE ARE GOOD CONTRACTORS AND THOSE NOT SO GOOD.

BEFORE WE GET INTO THE CONTROVERSIAL AREA OF COSTS, LET'S CONSIDER A FEW AREAS WHERE A GOOD SCHOOL BUS CONTRACT OPERATOR CAN MAKE LIFE FAR MORE LIVABLE FOR A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER. THE BOARD NO LONGER GETS INVOLVED IN THE AUTHORIZATION AND PURCHASING OF SCHOOL BUSES, TIRES, ENGINES, ETC. THE SCHOOL BOARD NO LONGER

SLIDE # 27

GETS INVOLVED IN AUTHORIZING AND PLANNING DRIVER TRAINING FOR SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS, WAGE DISPUTES, WAGE INCREASES, ETC. THE SCHOOL BOARD NO LONGER HAS TO WORRY ABOUT VANDALISM OF THE BUSES IN THEIR SCHOOL PARKING LOT, OR EVEN NEGOTIATING A NEW CONTRACT WITH THE DRIVERS UNION. THE TIME SPENT AT BOARD MEETINGS ON PUPIL TRANSPORTATION IS MINIMIZED, ALTHOUGH, OBVIOUSLY, THE BOARD STILL DOES HAVE TO HANDLE PARENTAL COMPLAINTS WITH THE CONTRACTOR SINCE THIS IS STILL THE BOARD'S RESPONSIBILITY. ALL OF THESE

SLIDE # 28

ITEMS NOW BECOME THE PRIVATE CONTRACTOR'S RESPONSIBILITY AND PART OF HIS BUSINESS. THIS LEAVES THE BOARD MORE TIME FOR OTHER MATTERS. WHILE SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION IS IMPORTANT IN TERMS OF ITS FUNCTION, IT NEVERTHELESS REPRESENTS ONLY A VERY MINOR PORTION OF THE TOTAL EXPENDITURE FOR EDUCATION. ACCORDING TO THE "RANKINGS OF THE STATES, 1970" AS ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, THE AVERAGE ACROSS THE UNITED STATES IS 3.2%. IT NOW BECOMES NECESSARY TO CONSIDER THE COSTS OF THE RESPECTIVE TYPES OF OPERATION.

ANY STUDY MADE FOR COMPARATIVE PURPOSES SHOULD BE DONE WITH EXTREME CARE. ALL AREAS OF COST MUST BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION, INCLUDING APPORTIONMENT OF SALARIES WHERE INDIVIDUALS HAVING ANOTHER MAJOR JOB AS A SUPERINTENDENT OR TEACHER OR PRINCIPAL ARE INVOLVED IN PUPIL TRANSPORTATION. IN CASES WHERE TEACHERS OR JANITORS ARE USED TO DRIVE A BUS, A PORTION OF THEIR EXPENSES ALSO SHOULD BE CONSIDERED. THE PURCHASING OFFICE OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM SHOULD ALSO BE CONSIDERED IN TERMS OF THE TIME THEY SPEND PURCHASING FOR THE BUS FLEET. ANY OUTSIDE REPAIRS, AS WELL AS THE FULL COST OF CURRENT MAINTENANCE MUST ALSO BE INCLUDED. FREQUENTLY, OF MAJOR SIGNIFICANCE, IS THE CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND DEPRECIATION SCHEDULE WHICH VARIES FROM STATE TO STATE.

SLIDE # 29

A GOOD CONTRACTOR IS A PROFESSIONAL BUSINESSMAN WHOSE ONLY JOB USUALLY IS PUPIL TRANSPORTATION. HIS LIVELIHOOD DEPENDS UPON THE EFFICIENCY OF HIS OPERATION AND IN THIS LIGHT HE IS JUST AS PROFESSIONAL IN HIS AREA AS THE EDUCATOR IS IN HIS FIELD. A PROPER CONTRACT ASSURES THE BOARD OF PERFORMANCE AND PERMITS THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN OTHER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES. INCIDENTALLY, THE SCHOOL BUS CONTRACT OPERATORS DO HAVE A NATIONAL ASSOCIATION WITH AN EXECUTIVE SECRETARY. THEIR OFFICE IS IN WASHINGTON, D. C., AND THE STAFF THERE HEADED BY WILLIAM "RED" REYNOLDS, WOULD BE MOST HAPPY TO ANSWER QUESTIONS, SUPPLY INFORMATION, OR PUT YOU IN TOUCH WITH YOUR NEAREST CONTRACT OPERATOR.

SLIDE # 30

SLIDE # 31

WHILE EVERY SCHOOL MAY HAVE DIFFERENCES IN PER PUPIL COSTS, IN TODAY'S TAX CLIMATE THE POSSIBILITY OF PRIVATE CONTRACTING IS WORTHWHILE CONSIDERING. PRIVATE CONTRACTING BECOMES A PAY AS YOU GO OPERATION AND OPERATING LEVIES HAVE HAD A BETTER TRACK RECORD THAN EXPANSIONS AND INCREASES. A WORD OF CAUTION, HOWEVER, IF YOUR STATE LAWS RESTRICT YOUR BOARD TO COMMITTING THEMSELVES ONLY FOR ONE YEAR, YOU HAVE DIFFICULTIES. MANY STATES HAVE RECOGNIZED THIS PROBLEM AND HAVE EXPANDED THEIR LAW TO ALLOW BOARDS TO COMMIT ENSUING BOARDS IN TERMS OF THREE, FOUR, AND FIVE YEAR CONTRACTS. THE INVESTMENT IN A FLEET OF BUSES FOR ONE YEAR WITH NO ASSURANCE OF RENEWAL DOES NOT FALL INTO

SLIDE # 32

THE CATEGORY OF A GOOD BUSINESS RISK. A FIVE-YEAR CONTRACT BECOMES THE IDEAL IN TERMS OF EQUIPMENT, EFFICIENCY, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, PRICE.

IF CONTRACTING IS JUST NOT FEASIBLE FOR A SCHOOL BOARD AFTER CAREFUL STUDY, THERE IS ANOTHER AREA OF CONSIDERATION NOT MENTIONED UNDER THE PURCHASING OF BUSES FOR A PUBLICLY OPERATED FLEET. WHILE ANY TYPE OF FINANCING OF BUSES IS MORE EXPENSIVE IN THE LONG RUN THAN PURCHASING THEM OUT-RIGHT, IT IS STILL BETTER TO CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY

SLIDE # 33

OF LEASING WITH AN OPTION TO BUY OR JUST PLAIN INSTALLMENT BUYING RATHER THAN CONTINUE RUNNING ANTIQUATED VEHICLES THAT PERHAPS SHOULD HAVE BEEN RETIRED TWO YEARS AGO. LEASING OR FINANCING MAKES MAXIMUM USE OF AVAILABLE FUNDS WITHOUT RISKING A VOTERS DEFEAT OF AN ADDITIONAL TAX LEVY.

SLIDE # 34

NOW THAT WE HAVE A WORKABLE PUPIL TRANSPORTATION FLEET, WHETHER IT BE SCHOOL OR PRIVATE, THE OPERATION OF IT MUST ENTER THE PICTURE. SCHEDULING AND ROUTING ARE PROBABLY THE TWO MAJOR AREAS OF CONSIDERATION IN TERMS OF SAFETY, COMFORT, AND ECONOMY. CAREFUL ANALYZATION AND MAXIMUM USE OF EXISTING BUSES WILL DO MUCH TO SAVE SCHOOL BOARDS' MONEY AND PROMOTE GOOD WILL THROUGH-OUT THE SCHOOL SYSTEM. IN MOST AREAS ROUTING HAS TO BE DONE IN TERMS OF MANUAL LABOR. DISTRICT MAPS MUST BE STUDIED, MARKED, TRIAL RUNS MADE, TIMINGS MADE, ALTERNATE ROUTES STUDIED, AND LOADS COMPUTED. ON THE HORIZON, HOWEVER, IS A NEW DEVELOPMENT, UNFORTUNATELY, STILL IN ITS INFANCY. A FEW BIG SCHOOL OPERATIONS ARE NOW USING THE COMPUTER AND USING IT QUITE EFFECTIVELY. THE

SLIDE # 35

COMPUTER, OF COURSE, IS AN EXCELLENT TOOL IF THE INFORMATION CAN BE PROPERLY FED INTO IT AND PROGRAMMED PROPERLY SO THAT ITS OUTPUT IS UNDERSTANDABLE AND USABLE. IN DELVING INTO THIS PARTICULAR AREA I FIND THAT WE ARE FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO HAVE ONE OF THE FEW EXPERTS IN THIS FIELD AS A REACTOR ON THIS PANEL. MEL THOMPSON OF TOM'S RIVER SCHOOLS IS THE GENTLEMAN TO WHOM I AM REFERRING. PERHAPS AFTER THE PROGRAM, ANY SPECIFIC QUESTIONS REGARDING COMPUTERIZATION OF ROUTING CAN BE ANSWERED BY MEL.

MOST OF MY INFORMATION CAME FROM A MAN MEL KNOWS

VERY WELL, BY THE NAME OF BOB LARSON WHO IS SUPERVISOR OF PUPIL TRANSPORTATION FOR THE ROBINDALE AREA SCHOOLS IN MINNEAPOLIS. HIS FEELING IS THAT GENERALLY SPEAKING THE STATE OF THE ART IS SUCH THAT ABOUT 50% OF ROUTINGS CAN BE USED OUT OF THE COMPUTER AND THE REMAINING 50% STILL REQUIRE PERSONAL ATTENTION.

THE ITEM ON THE HORIZON IS A FOUR YEAR FEDERAL GRANT IN EXCESS OF $400,000 FOR A FLORIDA PILOT PROJECT. THIS GRANT WAS MADE BY THE UNITED STATES OFFICE OF EDUCATION AS PART OF THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT. MR. THOMPSON IS INVOLVED IN THIS PARTICULAR PROJECT AND IT IS HOPED THAT FROM THIS, MORE SPECIFIC GUIDELINES WILL BE ESTABLISHED FOR VARIOUS SCHOOL SYSTEMS USE. THERE IS NO DOUBT AS ANSWERS ARE DEVELOPED, WE'LL ALL BE READING MORE ABOUT THIS PROJECT AND ITS RESULTS. MEANWHILE, MOST SCHOOL BOARDS WILL STILL HAVE TO CONTINUE WITH THE MANUAL METHOD OF SCHEDULING AND ROUTING.

SLIDE # 36

ANOTHER AREA OF OPERATIONS INVOLVES TWO CATEGORIES, MAINTENANCE AND RECORDS. A GOOD, SOUND, THOROUGH MAINTENANCE PROGRAM FOR TRANSPORTATION IS A MUST TO ASSURE THE CONTINUANCE OF SAFE DRIVING AS WELL AS ECONOMY OF OPERATION. BRAKES, STEERING, AND TIRES WILL AFFECT THE

SLIDE # 37

POTENTIAL FOR ACCIDENTS AND MUST BE CAREFULLY CHECKED TO ASSURE PROPER OPERATION. THE RECORD AREA ALLOWS THE SCHOOL BOARD TO DETERMINE COST DATA, AND ALLOWS

MAINTENANCE SUPERVISORS TO CORRECT DEFICIENCIES ON A PLANNED BASIS AND ASSURE THE MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY OF THE FLEET. EVEN IF YOUR WORK IS BEING DONE OUTSIDE, THE SUPERVISOR OF THE SCHOOL BUS OPERATION SHOULD MAINTAIN CAREFUL RECORDS AS TO WORK PERFORMED ON ANY OF THE VEHICLES UNDER HIS AUTHORITY. IN CASE OF ANY UNFORESEEN CALAMITY, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT RECORDS ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT AS TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOLS TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM.

THERE ARE SOME EXTERNAL INFLUENCES SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS SHOULD BE AWARE OF, AND THE MANNER IN WHICH THEY AFFECT PUPIL TRANSPORTATION. THE FIRST OF THESE IS THE

SLIDE # 38

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL BUSES. SINCE 1939 THE CONFERENCES ON MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL BUSES HAVE DELINIATED THE GUIDELINES FOLLOWED BY VIRTUALLY EVERY STATE IN THE UNION. THESE WERE EXACTLY AS INDICATED BY THE TITLE, MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL BUSES. THEY HAVE BEEN UPDATED APPROXIMATELY EVERY FOUR TO FIVE YEARS AND THE LAST CONFERENCE WAS IN 1970. THE 1970 BOOK HAS JUST BEEN RELEASED.

SLIDE # 39

IN 1968, THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES CREATED WHAT WAS CALLED THE "VEHICLE EQUIPMENT SAFETY COMMISSION." OUT OF THIS ORIGINATED WHAT WAS KNOWN AS THE SAFETY COMPACT AND FOR YEARS THE VESC WAS PRIMARILY IN-VOLVED IN THE UNIFORMITY OF TRAFFIC LAWS, ETC. WHEN

THE MOTOR VEHICLE AND TRA FFIC SAFETY ACT OF 1966 WAS PUT INTO EFFECT, REFERENCE WAS MADE TO THE VESC AS AN ADVISORY BOARD. THIS GROUP FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS HAS FELT THEY WERE NOT PERFORMING ACCORDING TO THEIR MANDATE BY LAW AND HAVE RECENTLY CREATED A SET OF STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL BUSES WHICH HAS BEEN SENT TO ALL OF THE STATES BELONGING TO THE SAFETY COMPACT, APPROXIMATELY 44 IN NUMBER.

WHILE THE TWO SETS OF STANDARDS ARE VERY SIMILAR, THEY DO DIFFER IN MANY AREAS. THE DIFFERENCES ARE SUBSTANTIAL ENOUGH TO CAUSE SOME CONCERN WITH THE BODY MANUFACTURERS SPECIFICALLY AS TO WHICH SET OF SPECIFICATIONS BECOMES THE GOVERNING ONE FOR THE STATES. THERE IS A SURVEY PRESENTLY BEING CONDUCTED TO DETERMINE WHICH SET OF STANDARDS WILL TAKE PRECEDENCE AND GIVE THE BUS MANUFACTURERS SOME INDICATION AS TO WHICH STANDARD THEY SHOULD BE BUILDING TO, TO COMPLY WITH THE LAW.

SLIDE # 40

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION CREATED BY THE MOTOR VEHICLE AND TRAFFIC SAFETY ACT OF 1966 HAS BEEN RELEASING ADDITIONAL MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY STANDARDS OR DOCKETS WHICH DO AFFECT SCHOOL BUSES. MANUFACTURERS OF COURSE, BY LAW MUST COMPLY WITH THE MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY STANDARDS AND CERTIFY TO THE SAME. SOME MATTERS UNDER CONSIDERATION BECOME OF INTEREST TO ALL SCHOOL

SLIDE # 41

BOARD MEMBERS, HOWEVER, IN THAT THEY WILL REQUIRE ADDITIONS TO THE VEHICLE OR CHANGES WHICH ULTIMATELY AFFECT THE PURCHASING PRICE. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT EVENTUALLY THE ELIMINATION OF THE POTENTIALLY INJURY PRODUCTING SEAT RAIL AT THE TOP OF THE SCHOOL BUS SEATS WILL OCCUR. THIS WILL BE PADDED IN SOME MANNER TO PROTECT THE YOUNGSTERS AGAINST FACIAL INJURIES AND, IN SEVERE IMPACTS, THE POSSIBILITY OF DEATH. PADDED SEATS IN MANY TYPES AND SIZES ARE READILY AVAILABLE NOW FROM ALL OF THE BODY MANUFACTURERS.

SLIDE # 42

I AM SURE THAT THERE IS SOMEONE IN THE AUDIENCE WHO IS ANXIOUSLY AWAITING THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK ABOUT SEAT BELTS IN BUSES AND PERHAPS THIS WILL ANTICIPATE THE QUESTION. THE INCORPORATION OF SEAT BELTS IN A SCHOOL BUS AS CURRENTLY

SLIDE # 43

PRODUCED WOULD BE MORE DANGEROUS THAN GOOD. AS YOU CAN SEE IN THIS PICTURE, THIS BELT FORMS A FULCRUM AND THE HEAD ON IMPACT WOULD HIT THE RAIL OF THE SEAT IN FRONT. WITH A PADDED SEAT SUCH AS WOULD BE TESTED TO MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY STANDARD 201 (REVISED) WHEREBY THE PADDING WILL ABSORB A HEAD FORM IMPACT OF SO MANY POUNDS, SO MANY MILLISECONDS WITHOUT FATALITY, SEAT BELTS COULD FEASIBLY BE USED.

SLIDE # 44

EVEN UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, HOWEVER, IT IS QUESTIONABLE BELTS ARE THE BEST WAY TO PROCEED. THERE ARE PEDIATRIC PHYSICIANS WHO FEEL THE PELVIC REGION OF A YOUNGSTER IS NOT YET SUFFICIENTLY FORMED TO ADEQUATELY

WITHSTAND THE SEAT BELT IN TERMS OF AN ACCIDENT WITHOUT SOME SERIOUS INJURY. TESTS ALREADY RUN INDICATE THAT SEAT BACKS WELL PADDED, AND SLIGHTLY HIGHER, HAVE A TENDENCY TO COMPARTMENTALIZE YOUNGSTERS AND KEEP THEM FROM SERIOUS INJURY IN CASE

SLIDE # 45

OF BAD ACCIDENTS. THESE WOULD FURNISH A TYPE OF PASSIVE RESTRAINT, AS OPPOSED TO HAVING A MONITOR TO INSURE PROPER FASTENING OF SEAT BELTS ON YOUNGSTERS RIDING SCHOOL BUSES. THE ONE OTHER QUESTION CONCERNING BELTS IN SCHOOL BUSES IS THE METHOD OF FASTENING THE BELTS THEMSELVES. IF THEY ARE T

SLIDE # 46

BE FASTENED IN THE APPROVED SAE MANNER, AT A 45° ANGLE TO THE FLOOR, THEY BECOME A TRIPPING HAZARD. IF THEY ARE TO BE FASTENED TO THE SEAT FRAME THEN THE FRAME HAS TO BE CONSIDERABLY REINFORCED AND QUITE POSSIBLY THE FLOOR AS WELL. IT IS THE SPEAKER'S PERSONAL OPINION THAT PASSIVE RESTRAINTS ARE BETTER IN SCHOOL BUSES THAN SEAT BELTS.

ANOTHER AREA PENDING APPROVAL IS STANDARD 17 COVERING THE TRANSPORTATION OF YOUTH IN THE UNITED STATES. THIS STANDARD INVOLVES THE DEFINITION OF A SCHOOL BUS, A REQUIREMENT FOR A PUPIL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PROGRAM THE COLLECTING AND REPORTING OF INFORMATION NEEDED TO IMPROVE SAFETY, THE IDENTIFICATION OF EQUIPMENT OF

SLIDE # 47

SCHOOL BUSES, DRIVER TRAINING, EMERGENCY EVACUATION DRILLS, SCHEDULING AND ROUTING, SEATING FOR ALL PUPILS BEING

TRANSPORTED, VEHICLE MAINTENANCE AND ANNUAL EVALUATION OF THE PUPIL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM. THE DEFINITION OF A SCHOOL BUS, OF COURSE, IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO US IN THE SCHOOL BUS BODY BUSINESS FOR MANY REASONS. SOME SCHOOLS HAVE PURCHASED SMALLER, CONVERTED VEHICLES FOR USE AS SCHOOL BUSES. THE SCHOOL BUS MANUFACTURERS INSTITUTE, TO WHICH ALL OF THE MAJOR MANUFACTURERS BELONG MAINTAINS A NEWSPAPER CLIPPING SERVICE ON ACCIDENTS. THROUGH

SLIDE # 48

NOVEMBER OF 1970, WHICH WOULD BE 11 MONTHS OF THAT YEAR, THERE WERE TWENTY YOUNGSTERS KILLED INSIDE SCHOOL BUSES. FOURTEEN, OR 70% OF THESE FATALITIES OCCURRED IN SMALL VEHICLES SUCH AS VANS, CONVERTED STATION WAGONS, ETC.

THE LAST EXTERNAL ITEM, OF INTEREST, OF COURSE, IS THE RECENT NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD REPORT. THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD IS AN EXCELLENT

SLIDE # 49

ORGANIZATION, WHOSE PRIMARY DUTY IS TO INVESTIGATE SEVERE AND UNUSUAL ACCIDENTS INVOLVING FATALITIES. MOST OF US ARE MORE FAMILIAR WITH THEIR REPORTS CONCERNING AIRPLANE CRASHES THAN PERHAPS SCHOOL BUSES. UNFORTUNATELY, THE TERMINOLOGY OF THIS PARTICULAR REPORT BROUGHT SUCH HEADLINES AS "UNITED STATES PROBE REVEALS YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL BUS IS A DEATH TRAP." WITH 18 MILLION TO 20 MILLION YOUNGSTERS RIDING IN SCHOOL BUSES TWICE DAILY, AND WITH FATALITIES LESS THAN 20 INSIDE BUSES, TO CALL IT A

DEATH TRAP JUST DOESN'T MAKE SENSE. IN ANALYZING THE REPORT IT MUST BE ASSUMED THE INVESTIGATING GROUP WAS SINCERE IN ITS EFFORTS. THEY OBSERVED CERTAIN ITEMS IN THE TWO ACCIDENTS THEY LOOKED AT AND FELT STRONGLY ENOUGH TO REPORT ACCORDINGLY. SOME OF THE POINTS RAISED HAVE MERIT AND ARE ALREADY BEING CHECKED BY BODY MANUFACTURERS. HAD THE REPORT RAISED THESE QUESTIONS AND RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL INVESTIGATION AND STUDY, THE PUBLISHING OF DISTORTED NEWS STORIES AND EDITORIALS MIGHT HAVE BEEN AVOIDED. CERTAINLY COUNTLESS PARENTS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES WOULD HAVE SLEPT BETTER AND THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION OVER THESE MANY YEARS, WITH THE SAFETY OF THE CHILDREN AS THEIR CONTINUING GOAL, WOULD HAVE BEEN RELIEVED OF SOME UNNECESSARY AND IT WOULD APPEAR, UNWARRANTED CRITICISM.

SCHOOL BUSES HAVE UNFORTUNATELY BEEN HIT BY CARS, VANS, TRUCKS, AND EVEN TRACTOR TRAILERS, HAVE RUN INTO TREES, BRIDGE ABUTMENTS, AND EVEN BUILDINGS, AND HAVE BEEN ROLLED, CARTWHEELED, AND EVEN BLOWN BY TORNADOES WITH A SAFETY RECORD OF .05 FATALITIES INSIDE THE BUS PER 100 MILLION PASSENGER MILES. THIS IS AN EXCELLENT RECORD, YET IT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED WITHOUT A CONTINUING GOAL OF GREATER SAFETY. TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, NO ONE HAS STOPPED TRYING TO MAKE IT EVEN BETTER. IT DOES NOT SEEM TO DESERVE THE STATEMENT AND I QUOTE,

"IN GENERAL THESE PANELS ACT TO KEEP OUT THE WEATHER OR HOLD INSULATION IN PLACE BUT DO NOT DEVELOP A SUFFICIENTLY HIGH PROPORTION OF AVAILABLE STRENGTH TO BE REGARDED AS MORE THAN COVERING MATERIAL."

IT SEEMS SOMEWHAT UNFAIR AS WELL TO INDICATE ALL LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS WOULD NOT PURCHASE IMPORTANT SCHOOL BUS DESIGN CHANGES. IF THIS WERE TRUE OUR PARTICULAR COMPANY WOULD NOT BE WHERE WE ARE TODAY. CHANGES HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN VISION, STRUCTURE, DOOR SIZE, SEATING, HEATING, DRIVER CONTROLS, DEFROSTING, BUMPERS, DIE FORMED PANELS, ZINC STEEL AND LIGHTING JUST TO NAME A FEW. THESE CHANGES CAME ABOUT PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF COMPETITION, THAT'S TRUE, BUT NOT NECESSARILY THE LOW DOLLAR. MOST OF THESE CHANGES WERE PURCHASED AT A LOCAL LEVEL, PROVED SUCCESSFUL, AND THEN INCORPORATED IN STATE AND NATIONAL SPECIFICATIONS. WHILE THERE ARE LOCAL BOARDS WHO LOOK AT THE DOLLAR BID AND FEEL THEY CANNOT TAKE TIME TO LISTEN TO THE PRESENTATION OF THE BUS BODY SALESMAN TO DETERMINE WHAT BEST FITS THEIR OPERATION, WHAT IS NEW IN BUSES, AND WHAT SERVICE HAS BEEN OFFERED AND IS NOW BEING OFFERED, THIS ATTITUDE FORTUNATELY IS NOT IN THE MAJORITY. IF IT WERE NOT FOR THE BOARD MEMBERS AND THEIR WILLINGNESS TO DO MANY OF THE THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED HERE TODAY, I DO NOT BELIEVE WE WOULD HAVE A SAFETY RECORD SUCH AS EXISTS WITH SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION.

SLIDE # 50

SLIDE # 51

I REALIZE THAT MANY OF THE ITEMS THIS MORNING WERE ONLY COVERED SUPERFICIALLY. TO TRY TO COVER A SUBJECT AS SUBSTANTIAL AS THIS IN THIRTY MINUTES IS A DIFFICULT TASK AT BEST. A CHINESE PHILOSOPHER ONCE SAID A THOUSAND MILE JOURNEY BEGINS WITH THE FIRST STEP. IT IS MY SINCERE HOPE THAT THIS IS THE FIRST STEP.